

Extension Service
U.S. Dept. of Agr.
Washington 25, D. C.



EASTERN REGION

Interpreting Economic Information for State and Regional Use

Wednesday, November 1, 1950

Indications of recent economic and social developments within the north-eastern region show certain aspects of similarity and some variations. On the economic side we see a decline in farm income in some localities. There are new mills and industrial plants being established contributing to both urban and rural incomes in some areas.

Reports indicated that there has been rather extensive buying of farm machinery, home equipment, television sets, etc. with families using some of their savings or credit for such purchases.

Prices have been gradually rising but the supplies have been good except for certain temporary shortages due to scare buying.

From the standpoint of social and community development several key points were considered. Marked population increases in some areas present a problem, while in other areas problems arise from younger people leaving the rural areas. Hospitals and schools have been making improvements and increasing in number but further improvements are still needed.

Requests for economic information usually concern supply and price situation with requests on income prospects and wise buying procedures occasionally being made. Specialists, felt that economic information is often asked for in different terms than we ordinarily consider "economic", such as suggestions for inexpensive main dishes, types of equipment to purchase and making choices on use of income.

It was also indicated that families have an interest in knowing more about economic trends before making certain major decisions. For example, families may ask: "If we have more income, shall we expand our business or use the money for family living?" Mention was made of the desirability of presenting this information of an economic nature to men and women jointly since the decisions would be made by the family.

Phases of the Outlook which it seemed desirable to emphasize include:

1. Reasons for the mobilization program, (higher taxes).
2. Importance of buying wisely during a mobilization period as well as for a longer time.
3. Production for consumers has been high - if it is cut back somewhat, the results should not be too serious.

4. Even if we have higher prices, we may also have higher incomes.
5. Alternative choices are always possible -- and adjustments can be made if we can't have all of the things we want.

Certain questions were raised for further consideration:

1. What information on how much to spend and what to buy should be given to families in view of present conditions?
2. What should we tell people about shortages?
3. Should more training on economic information be given jointly to men and women on extension staffs with the hope that more information will be presented jointly to men and women in the counties and communities?
4. Should we have more training and information on recent legislation affecting families, such as social security, taxation and other public policies?

Chairman.	Constance Burgess, Maine
Discussion Leader	Doris Anderson, New Jersey
Secretary	Barbara Higgins, Massachusetts
Consultants	Extension Service; Florence Hall
	BHNEE: Gertrude Weiss, Mary Walsh, Rita Carter